

# Substance Abuse

## Key facts and stats



Substance abuse refers to alcohol abuse as well as misuse, dependence, and addiction to legal and illegal drugs.

The social cost of drug and alcohol addiction in the United States is estimated at \$294 billion per year in lost productivity and costs associated with law enforcement, health care, justice, welfare, and other programs and services.

The good news is that for every \$1 invested in addiction treatment, there is an estimated return of up to \$12 in reduced drug-related crime, criminal justice costs, theft, and health care costs.

### The Workplace

Most businesses, regardless of their size, will at some point have to deal with an employee who is addicted to alcohol or drugs, because most people who are addicted to these substances are employed.

Alcohol and drug abuse is estimated to cost American businesses roughly \$81 billion a year in lost productivity alone.

- 76% of illicit drug users are employed either full- or part-time.
- 81% of binge drinkers (five or more drinks on the same occasion at least once in 30 days) in 2001 were employed full- or part-time.
- 80% of heavy drinkers (five or more drinks on the same occasion on at least five different days in the past 30 days) were employed.

Businesses can reduce the impact of alcohol and drug addiction by making a commitment to a drug-free workplace and by making it easier for employees to get help. Smaller business may not be able to provide in-house resources, but they can refer employees to appropriate local organizations such as Alcoholics Anonymous, Narcotics

Anonymous, Al-Anon/Alateen, or to local treatment professionals.

### Youth

- Today over half (54%) of adolescents have tried an illicit drug by the time they finish high school.
- 80% of teenagers have consumed alcohol (more than just a few sips) by the end of high school; 51% have done so by 8<sup>th</sup> grade.
- Half of all adolescents receiving mental health services have a co-occurring substance use disorder; as many as 75%-80% of adolescents receiving inpatient substance abuse treatment have a co-existing mental disorder.

### The Justice System

Nearly 1.7 million of the 2 million adult Americans in prison or jail are seriously involved with drugs or alcohol.

It is estimated that of the \$38 billion spent on corrections in 1996, more than \$30 billion was spent incarcerating individuals who had a history of drug and/or alcohol abuse, were convicted of drug and/or alcohol violations, were using drugs and/or alcohol at the time of their crimes, or had committed their crimes to get money to buy drugs.

Substance abuse treatment in prison can reduce post-release criminal activity up to 80 percent and reduce arrests up to 64%. One study found that three years after release from prison, 73% of individuals who had received such treatment had not returned to prison, while 75% of those who had not received treatment had been reincarcerated.

### Co-occurring Disorders

When substance abuse and mental illness are both present, it is called a co-occurring disorder. Integrated treatment for both disorders must occur in order for successful recovery to take place.

**If your organization, church or group would like to learn more about substance abuse, please contact Peggy Crutchfield at 441-5300 to arrange a speaker or go to [www.norfolkcsb.org](http://www.norfolkcsb.org) and click on Speakers Bureau.**

# Employees Missed 500,000 Work Days Last Year

**DUE TO ALCOHOLISM ALONE. STILL THINK YOU DON'T NEED TO BE CONCERNED ABOUT SUBSTANCE ABUSE IN THE WORKPLACE?**

**Drug and alcohol addiction. It's a workplace issue.**

**It is also a national epidemic. Over 15 million people were dependent on either drugs or alcohol in 2002.**

**Why should we care about this?** Because untreated addiction costs this country over \$294 billion dollars each year in unnecessary health care costs, accidents, new prisons and lost earnings.

Only 10.3% of individuals age 12 and older who need treatment for drug or alcohol problems receive it, despite the tremendous toll that addiction takes on individuals, employers and society as a whole.

The reasons for this are many, but access and availability remain two of the greatest obstacles. This is especially troubling because addiction treatment is just as successful as treating other chronic health problems such as asthma and treatment is cost-effective.

**It's Good Business** to support employees in recovery and their loved ones. Employers of all sizes, from the largest corporation to the smallest neighborhood business, have everything to gain by taking an active role in addressing their employees' drug and alcohol related problems and supporting the recovery process.

**Organizations experience a variety of benefits** by committing to a drug- and alcohol-free workplace and supporting treatment and recovery programs, including:

- Increased productivity and higher morale
- Increased quality of performance
- Lower workers' compensation insurance

- Reduced absenteeism
- Improved safety.

**The cost of treatment and recovery support programs** for employees is always a tremendous concern to any business, large or small. Reports have shown that the money invested in these services and programs is minimal when you consider the huge payoff. For instance:



- An Ohio survey of 668 drug and alcohol treatment residents one year after treatment indicated that absenteeism decreased by 89%, tardiness by 92% and on-the-job injuries by 57%.
- Blue Cross/Blue Shield found that families' health care costs dropped by 87 percent after addiction treatment.

Employers who support individuals trying to beat alcohol or drug addiction will see their commitment returned many times over in the form of increased productivity, profitability, and loyalty.

**You can make a difference.**

Here are some steps any employer can take to address drug and alcohol problems in the workplace.

- 1. Get real.** Odds are that someone who works for you is abusing

alcohol, using illicit drugs, or trying to cope with addiction-related problems at home. Assume that the physical, mental, and emotional toll that an addiction problem is having on that person is hindering his or her work performance and, ultimately, your business interests.

- 2. Educate yourself** about drug and alcohol use and addiction issues in the workplace and how to address them. See the next page for free resources.
  - 3. Accept, encourage and support** employees trying to beat a drug or alcohol problem. Provide them with informational materials on local community resources. Promote your concerns about drug and alcohol use and addiction and your company's support for treatment. Host alcohol-free work related events. Consider forming an Employee Assistance Program.
  - 4. Make an announcement** about your company's support and concern for employees engaged in or in need of treatment.
  - 5. Create a confidential feedback mechanism** for employees to provide you with input on how helpful and informative your support and encouragement are to them. An employee survey may suffice. Make changes to address any issues that arise.
- Our jobs are important to all of us. By working with employees to create an alcohol- and drug-free workplace, all of us will prosper—employees and their friends and families, employers, and the communities in which we all live and work.**

- **17th Annual National Alcohol & Drug Addiction Recovery Month**  
[www.recoverymonth.gov/2006](http://www.recoverymonth.gov/2006)
- **Norfolk Community Services Board**  
Prevention & Youth Services    441-1180  
Substance Abuse Services       664-6670
- **Mid-Atlantic ATTC (The Addiction Technology Transfer Center)**  
[www.mid-attc.org](http://www.mid-attc.org)
- **Virginia Department of Mental Health, Mental Retardation and Substance Abuse Services**  
[www.dmhmrzas.virginia.gov/](http://www.dmhmrzas.virginia.gov/)
- **U. S. Department of Health and Human Services**  
Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration  
[www.samhsa.gov](http://www.samhsa.gov)
- **Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's Workplace Helpline**  
1-800-WORKPLACE  
[www.workplace.samhsa.gov](http://www.workplace.samhsa.gov)
- **U.S. Department of Labor's Working Partners for an Alcohol- and Drug-Free Workplace**  
866-4-USA-DOL  
[www.dol.gov/asp/programs/drugs/workingpartners/materials/materials.asp#posters](http://www.dol.gov/asp/programs/drugs/workingpartners/materials/materials.asp#posters)
- **Institute for a Drug-Free Workplace**  
202-842-7400  
[www.drugfreeworkplace.org](http://www.drugfreeworkplace.org)
- **Employee Assistance Professionals Association (EAPA) in Arlington**  
703-522-6272  
[www.eap-association.com](http://www.eap-association.com)